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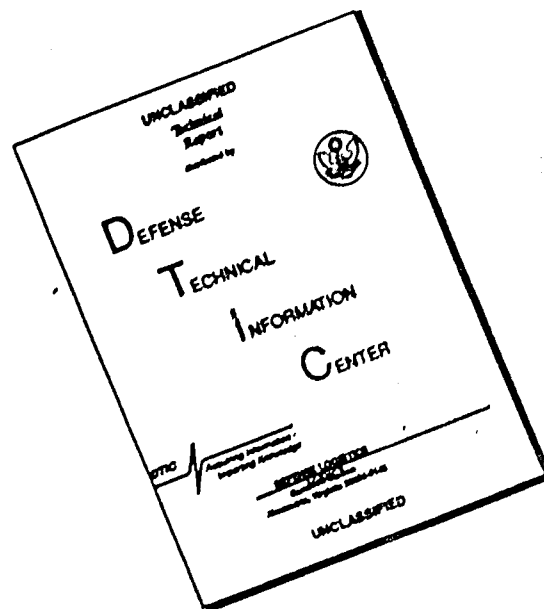
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AGDA (M) (18 Jun 70)

FOR OT UT 701119

25 June 1970

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 864th Engineer Battalion, Period Ending 31 January 1970

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BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

*Kenneth G. Wickham*

KENNETH G. WICKHAM  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 864TH ENGINEER BATTALION (CONST)  
APO 96240

EGACBC-3

31 January 1970

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 864th Engineer Battalion (Construction)  
for Period ending 31 January 1970, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

THRU: Commanding Officer  
35th Engineer Group (Construction)  
APO 96312

Commanding General  
18th Engineer Brigade  
ATTN: AVBC-C  
APO 96377

Commanding General  
United States Army, Vietnam  
ATTN: AVHGC (DST)  
APO 96307

Commander in Chief  
United States Army, Pacific  
ATTN: GPOP-DT  
APO 96588

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development  
Department of the Army (ACSFOR DA)  
Washington, D.C. 20310

1. Section 1, Operations: Significant Activities

a. General

Extensive reorganization has marked the battalion's activities during this quarter. In order to facilitate control and increase overall efficiency,

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a second Task Force has been set up to direct operations in the Ban Me Thuot area. (See Inclosure 1) In order to augment the effort of Task Force 21 in the Ban Me Thuot area, C Company, 19th Engineer Battalion (Combat) was attached to the battalion on 19 November 1969. The first platoon, 513th Engineer Company (Dump Truck) was detached on 2 December 1969.

The battalion has divided its effort between operational support missions throughout the southern portion of the II Corps Tactical Zone and the line of communications program along National Highways QL-1 and QL-21.

b. Commanders and Principal Staff

Bn CO	1 Nov 69 - 24 Jan 70	LTC Russell A. Glenn
	25 Jan 70 - 31 Jan 70	LTC Jack W. Martin
Bn XO	1 Nov 69 - 13 Jan 70	Maj William T. Cooper, Jr.
	14 Jan 70 - 31 Jan 70	Maj Raymond G. McDowall, Jr.
S-1	1 Nov 69 - 31 Jan 70	1LT Paul F. Sogert
S-2/3	1 Nov 69 - 13 Jan 70	Maj Raymond G. McDowall, Jr.
	14 Jan 70 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt Theodore W. Yates
S-4	1 Nov 69 - 6 Dec 69	Cpt Donald M. Dempsey
	7 Dec 69 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt James H. Trandler
Bn Surgeon	1 Nov 69 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt John R. Strohlein
Bn Chaplain	1 Nov 69 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt George D. Hankins, Jr.
Bn Commo Officer	1 Nov 69 - 31 Jan 70	1LT John F. Mahuliffe
Task Force Whiskey C.O.	1 Nov 69 - 13 Jan 70	Maj Harrison J. Moot
	14 Jan 70 - 31 Jan 70	Maj William T. Cooper, Jr.
Task Force 21 C.O.	29 Nov 69 - 31 Jan 70	Maj Richard E. Works
C.O., HHC	1 Nov 69 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt Robert B. Pitzschler
C.O., Co A	1 Nov 69 - 7 Nov 69	Cpt James H. Baldridge, Jr.
	1 Nov 69 - 6 Dec 69	1LT Wayne F. Belloff
	7 Dec 69 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt Donald M. Dempsey
C.O., Co B	1 Nov 69 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt William E. Branch
C.O., Co C	1 Nov 69 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt Buford C. Murphree
C.O., Co D	1 Nov 69 - 6 Dec 69	Cpt Robert G. Biglow
	7 Dec 69 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt William R. Washburn
C.O., 610th Engr Co (CS)	1 Nov 69 - 6 Dec 69	Cpt Theodore W. Yates
	7 Dec 69 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt Gregory C. Peck
C.O., 73rd Engr Co (CS)	1 Nov 69 - 31 Dec 69	Cpt Thomas W. Skelton
	1 Jan 70 - 5 Jan 70	1LT William T. Wright
	6 Jan 70 - 31 Jan 70	1LT John H. Cochran, Jr.
C.O., 553rd Engr Co (FB)	1 Nov 69 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt David M. Folger
C.O., 687th Engr Co (LC)	8 Nov 69 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt David S. Borkman II

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C.O. 569th Topo	1 Nov 69 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt Robert C Swan
Co (Corps)		
C.O., Co C, 19th	19 Nov 69 - 4 Jan 70	Cpt David A Corbett
Engr Bn (CS)	5 Jan 70 - 15 Jan 70	1LT Bruce R Anderson
	16 Jan 70 - 31 Jan 70	Cpt Edward W Wildrick, III

c. Company Narratives

1. Company A

During the early part of the quarter Company A left its rear staging area at Whiskey Mountain and set up its base camp. Second and third shops as well as the mess section remained at Task Force Whiskey rear. The second shop subsequently joined the company on Whiskey Mountain during the latter part of January.

On 20 January the 250 ton per hour primary and secondary units were brought to Whiskey and set in place on their permanent foundations. The two new headwalls (75 TPH & 250 TPH) were finished 15 January.

The quarter also showed the company involved in base camp development. It was felt that to insure the security of the ever growing industrial complex, live-in-fight-in bunkers were needed on the perimeter of the crusher/asphalt plant site. Aided by G/864th the bunkers were constructed and occupied. The support in building, and the movement to the new bunkers was only part of a companies contribution to the development of the base camp. The company also assisted in laying barbed wire and perimeter lighting.

The development of the quarry is perhaps the biggest achievement accomplished during the quarter. The quarry personnel performed a difficult task, since the entire output was from the 75 TPH crusher. During the quarter a total of 15,792 yards were produced, including 3,665 during the peak week.

The annual I.G. Inspection was also held during the quarter. A Company successfully passed the inspection.

2. Company B

During this quarter B Company moved from Camp Sip Ja Sung, Nha Trang to Camp Swampy, located near Dan Mo Thuot.

Elements of the 2nd Construction Platoon rehabilitated seven (7) live-in fight-in bunkers by removing the earth from on the top and around the sides. Diagonal bracing had been removed from inside the bunkers resulting in the bunkers shifting. The bunkers were pushed back flush and the inside diagonal bracing put in. Membrane was laid on two bunker tops for water proofing.

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The main body of the 2nd Construction Platoon with a section of EM Platoon returned from Phan Thiet on the 2nd of December 1969 and went to support C/19th Engr Bn (CBF) in dismantling Camp Jerome. Fighting bunkers were torn down and the timbers were salvaged and transported to Nha Trang.

The Second Platoon and EM Section returned to Camp Swampy after the completion of tearing down Camp Jerome to construct a SEM hut and install flood lights on the perimeter. EM section provided dozer to strip grass portions of the perimeter.

EM section started maintenance on QL-21, by grading the approaches to bridges 30, 36, 38a, 38b and repairing the bypass at bridge 37. The second Construction Platoon started patching pot holes on QL-21. Approx. 5 kilometers of patch work has been completed.

EM Platoon started the restoration of QL-21 from bridge 30 to Ban Me Thuot. They constructed and spread 3"(-) rock on road shoulders and compacted to grade and cut ditch line from 15 kilometer east of bridge 30 for approximately 1.5 km. This project is being held due to a higher priority project at Ban Me Thuot East Airfield. The EM section is currently upgrading hover lanes at EM East Field. Presently EM has 2-290, 1-water distributor, 1-segmented compactor, 1-D7, and 1-grader.

### 3. Company C

A large portion of the work effort by this unit during the reporting period has been utilized on the upgrading of National Highway QL-1 from Phan Thiet to Ap Long Lam.

The main effort undertaken by this unit on the QL-1 project involved the repair of potholes and the widening of the road base. By the process of scarifying, filling, grading, wetting and compacting, the road between AN91532332 and AN88141412 was freed of potholes. Along sections of the roadway lined with dried rice paddies, the organic material was removed and sand was placed. Fill has been laid on top of the blanket of sand and has been wetted and compacted.

The Construction Platoons were kept busy placing culverts along QL-1 during the afterpart of the quarter. During one 7 day period, 329 linear feet of culvert were placed.

The following were utilized in accomplishing the above:

9823 USMH

4751 EH

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Construction of live-in-fight-in bunkers at Whiskey Mountain took a major portion of the company's manpower.

The following were constructed:

(1) 9 live-in-fight-in bunkers complete with concrete pads, sills posts, bracing, caps, bearing plates, stringers, decking, siding, roofing paper and guard bunkers.

(2) 2 bunkers with concrete pad, sills, and posts.

(3) 6 concrete pads.

The improvement of the unit base camp on Whiskey Mountain was a significant activity. The improvements included:

(1) Construction of a 12' x 12' guard tower 25' high.

(2) Emplacement of 750' of triple concertina wire, and 400 yards of double apron barbed wire fence.

(3) Laying of 1700' of electrical wire.

(4) Construction of a 4 seat latrine and a 3 seat latrine.

(5) Erection of a dining hall tent with a 3" x 12" timber floor.

(6) Making of 640 concrete blocks.

(7) Revetment of tents and providing overhead cover for main and supplementary guard positions.

(8) Construction of a generator shack for a 100kw generator.

(11) The addition of 14 perimeter lights.

Relocation of the Company from one finger of the mountain to the adjoining finger was accomplished during this period.

(1) All tents, storage facilities, vehicles and equipment were removed from the previous location to the new site.

(2) New tents were erected with revetments.

The following were utilized for base camp improvement and construction of live-in-fight-in bunkers.

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- (1) 14,502 United States Man-hours
- (2) 8,616 Vietnamese Man-hours
- (3) 5,706 Equipment hours.

#### 4. Company D

This past reporting period, Company D, 864th EBC has continued to devote all efforts to its assigned missions, while operating from its base camp at Khanh Duong (QL-21), RVN. Despite the monsoons rains with the ensuing mud and problems, D Company has enjoyed a productive quarter of work effort.

The Earthmoving Platoon continued to devote the majority of its effort toward its primary mission of restoration and continued maintenance of highway QL-21. During the initial part of the quarter, the platoon geared its attention to improving the drainage along QL-21 from Bridge #12 (BP643967) to Khanh Duong. A majority of the work effort was centered at Bridge #12, where it was necessary to keep traffic moving across the bypass until the bridge was completed. 3,270 Man Hours and 2,230 Equipment Hours were devoted to this road maintenance effort. The majority of the platoon was dispatched to Duc My in late November to begin upgrade of the shoulders along QL-21. Though rain continued to slow production, 1½ miles of shoulders were upgraded using 4,000 Man Hours, and 3,400 Equipment Hours. Additional road maintenance continued periodically near Khanh Duong. No paving was done during this period because of the continued rain of the monsoons.

Both the Vertical Construction Platoons were very busy this quarter, performing construction tasks. 1st Construction Platoon devoted most of the period to that of constructing Bridge #15 (BQ636019) on National Highway QL-21. The start of the period found 1st Platoon driving piles at the site. Now after approximately 9,760 Man Hours and 4,200 Equipment Hours, traffic is just about ready to pass over the new construction. Bridge #27 was the next task for 1st Platoon. To date, the stream bed has been cleared and the footer for the piles has been poured. Work is continuing on the prefabrication of rebar for the remaining concrete work. Total Man hours utilized on the job so far: 1500 MH & 332 EH.

2nd Construction Platoon undertook many tasks this period. At the beginning of the period, they tied up the few loose ends at MACV (Khanh Duong) and that of the restoration of Bridge #12 (BP643967). The work on those two projects consisted of wiring revetments and a leech field at MACV and upgrading the new bypass approachways at Bridge #12. Total man hours used this period at Bridge #12 was 2,360 and Equipment Hours totaled 2,274. After the completion of the two jobs mentioned, 2nd Platoon took on the task of dismantling the base camp of Co A, 70th Engr Bn (C). All buildings were taken down and the materials salvaged. Other materials that were located in their S-4 yard were also salvaged. The total job consumed 6,221 Man Hours

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and 1,215 Equipment Hours. After dismantling the basecamp, 2nd Platoon moved out to Van Ninh. There their task was that of renovating another MACV Compound. New billets were constructed, and an extension for the present building was completed. In addition, many general renovations about the already existing compound were performed. Upon the completion of that project 2nd Platoon moved further south to Vinh Xuong, where once again they undertook the building of another MACV Compound. This is the project they are working on to date. So far they have 85% of one building completed to include walls, roof trusses, plumbing facilities, and 50% of the electrical work. Total Man Hours Expended so far on the MACV projects are: 3,130 Man Hours and 1,455 Equipment Hours.

In addition to primary missions, jobs of lesser priority were handled as opportunities developed. Three civic action programs, (Excavation of a sanitary fill pit in the area of Duc My, for the ARVN Training Center; culverts were installed in nearby Hamlets; A road for Low Son Training area was constructed. Total effort included 100 Man Hours and 40 Equipment Hours. Upgrade of the unit area continued, consisting primarily of grading and improving drainage.

At the close out of this period, Delta Company had started to take part in the ARVN Affiliation Program. Four ARVN Engineers from the Nha Trang area have been assigned to the unit and are working on the various job sites concentrating primarily on the bridge sites.

#### 5. Company C/19th.

On 19 November 1969, Co C, 19th Engr Bn (Cbt) (A) was organized from former personnel and equipment of the 70th Engr Bn (Cbt) (A), which was being redeployed back to the States for Reactivation.

The company along with Co B, 864th Engr Bn inherited the Camp Swampy Compound formerly occupied by Co B, 70th Engr Bn and 630th Engr Co (LE) located at the Hot Rocks quarry site (BQ192135).

Co C, 19th Engr Bn inherited five partially completed projects from the departing 70th Engr Bn. Four of these projects, Bridge 21/36, Duc Lap Airfield Maintenance, O-1 Aircraft Revetments, and Duc Xuyen Airfield Repair were completed this period.

Bridge 21/36 was completed 11 Dec 69. Five steel stringers were placed; docking and treadway were installed; handrail group and curbing were constructed and painted; and classification signs were erected.

Repair of Duc Lap Airfield was assumed by Co C, 19th Engr Bn on 19 Nov 69. The project consisted of removing all membrane from runway, grading, filling pot holes and depressions, compacting with an air mobile compactor, providing drainage ditches on both sides of runway, constructing six runway markers, and repairing access road. Work was completed 27 Nov 69.

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The first Platoon completed the Duc Xuyen Airfield Repair Project. On 9 Nov 69 they began installing MSA1 matting. The first Platoon personnel installed, pinned, and anchored matting.

The project was expanded to include painting of the entire airfield. On 22 Jan 70, 4 men and 800 gallons of non-skid paint were airlifted to the site. The task was completed 30 January 1970.

The Second Platoon continued construction of the triple concrete box culvert, Bridge 21/31. The box culvert, when completed will be 51' long with 3 each 7' square culverts. During this period, the 2nd Platoon constructed all forms and poured the south end wing walls and 48' of culvert. Three float extension forms and the north end wing wall forms are presently ready for installation.

The 70th Engr Bn (Cbt) (A) redeployed to the States for deactivation 29 Nov 69 leaving behind its former cantonment area, Camp Jerome, to be dismantled. Work was begun immediately by the Third Platoon who moved into the base camp to facilitate the task assignment. The platoon unearthed and dismantled 32 live-in-fight-in bunkers; dismantled roofs and dozed down 10 concrete live-in-fight-in bunkers; and dismantled 7 SEA huts, 13 guard towers (9 wooden, 4 steel), 5 shower facilities, and 5 burn out latrines. The materials were loaded on vehicles and transported to designated locations. All new materials remaining in the S-4 yard were hauled to Hot Rocks Industrial Site for use by Task Force 21.

On 9 Dec 69 the 2nd Platoon teamed with the 553rd Engr Co (FB) to construct a 5 float reinforced raft on the Ea Krong An river to transport the equipment of the 687th Engr Co (LC) across the river. The raft was constructed on 9 Dec 69, and the equipment started across soon after dawn 10 Dec 69. After moving all the equipment to the far bank, the raft was secured near the bridge for future service in returning the equipment. The 2nd Platoon returned to the raft 19 Dec 69 and ferried the land clearing equipment back across the river. After this was accomplished, they dismantled the raft loaded the components upon the bridge trucks, and returned to Hot Rocks.

Work was started this period on Bridge 21/37. The present scope of work calls for the use of the one remaining span as the entire span of the bridge. A flow determined that this single span would be sufficient to handle the flow of water. This span had one abutment and one pier so it was necessary to convert the pier into an abutment with wing walls. The 1st Platoon began construction by cutting a flow diversion channel on the west side of the existing span. Two 48" culverts were placed in the channel and the bypass was rebuilt over them. The water was then pumped from around the pier. However, the introduction of a considerable amount of water from an unknown source each night hampered progress for footer construction since hours were expended in reducing water to a workable level. A Gradall was utilized to excavate around the pier. The area between the destroyed east abutment and

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the pier was filled with blast rock and burrowed and compacted with a vibratory sheepsfoot roller. Work has been temporarily discontinued due to the priority of the Duc Lap projects which have been assigned to the 1st Platoon.

6. 73rd Engr Co (CS)

At the end of the reporting period this unit had just completed a move from Qui Nhon to Phan Thiet. A temporary base camp was constructed on the beach at Phan Thiet. Eight GP medium tents were set up as temporary living quarters, and two maintenance tents were set up for a motorpool. The first two weeks of November were utilized mainly in off loading LST's on the beach and moving the companies equipment into our temporary base camp, and building a 15' X 30' orderly room. Approximately 13,104 Man Hours were expended in accomplishing the above.

The relocation of this unit to Whiskey Mountain and subsequent base camp preparation took a major portion of the man hours expended in the final two weeks of November. The relocation included:

- (1) A one day move of 40 personnel and sixteen vehicles utilizing 400 Man Hours and 160 Equipment Hours.
- (2) Moving of the orderly room and building a 10' X 15' extension to said orderly room.
- (3) Setting up of 4 GP medium tents for living purposes and two tents for mess purposes, plus placing flooring in the mess tents.
- (4) Construction of latrine and shower facilities.
- (5) Construction of revetment around tents.
- (6) Constructions of eight fighting bunkers, complete with sand bagged revetments.
- (7) Placement of thirty-six perimeter lights around the perimeter.
- (8) A total of 6,835 man hours and approximately 1,500 equipment hours were expended, 9,300 sandbags were filled and placed.

Another major project this quarter has been this units earth work and road maintenance. The following was achieved:

- (1) Filled and leveled maintenance area of 110,000 sq. ft. Hauled 1400 yards of base course as fill.

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(2) 2,200 meters of road was built to form a road network into our maintenance area.

(3) Stripping by dozers over an area of approximately 900,000 sq. yards expending 1,689 man hours and 563 equipment hours.

(4) Repaired approximately 200 meters of by-pass at Bridge #11 north of Phan Thiet, grid coordinates AN 88 141412.

(5) A total of 46,060 gallons of penoprima was sprayed on the existing road network at Whiskey Mountain.

A large portion of the months of December and January were spent in a concrete operation at Whiskey Mountain. This includes an asphalt plant pad consisting of 10,250 sq. ft. of surface area, three 20' X 40' supply pads, a pug mill head wall three feet high, a 20' X 50' generator pad, two 12' X 40' crusher pads, a 12' X 68' crusher pad, and a 15' X 20' generator pad. At present this unit has completed the form work for a 105 linear foot asphalt bin head wall seven feet in height and 18" thick.

(1) In accomplishing the above 4,952 man hours and 1,648 equipment hours were expended. 946 cubic yards of concrete were poured utilizing 1,899 bags of cement; a total of 3,108 linear feet of form work was constructed.

So far this quarter a total of 440,000 gallons of water has been hauled by this unit for shower and cooking purposes.

Another major project for this unit is equipment support for other units. A total of 1379 man hours and 1,020 equipment hours were expended for this type of support.

During the latter part of January, significant effort was expended in moving asphalt plant components to the plant site from Task Force Whiskey (rear) at LZ Betty.

#### 7. 610th Engr Co (CS)

The 610th Engineer Company (Construction Support) organized under MTO&E 5-114DPO2, has been located near the village of Khanh Chi, District of Khanh Duong, Province of Khanh Hoa since March 1969.

Inclement weather completely halted asphalt production for the majority of the reporting period and seriously reduced rock production to 20,000 cubic yards (est). Numerous remedies were tried to override monsoon weather but none proved successful in asphalt production, mainly due to the balling of wet aggregate material, this in turn clogging the dryer. Furrowing of the asphalt aggregate piles to aid in drying did not work. The only apparent answer would be the construction of extensive bins with overhead cover. These would only be practical if the unit was in a static position.

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Enlisted personnel shortages continued to hamper construction operation. The extreme shortages of EM began to cause a definite morale problem as a tour of guard duty was required every night. A thorough evaluation of security requirements and proper location of sentry towers lessened the amount of guards required. In addition the importance and need for sentry requirements was stressed during Commander's Calls which helped to alleviate the morale problem.

This unit underwent a Command Maintenance Management Inspection and an Annual General Inspection and was found to be satisfactory in both areas.

The 610th Engineer Company (CS) has worked closely with the Montagnard people of the Province of Khanh Duong. During this quarter assistance was given in the construction of a Buddhist Temple and a Methodist Church. A major problem for many of the isolated villages is inundation during the monsoon season. Numerous culverts were constructed for the people and the value of proper drainage was proved to the local people.

#### 8. 553rd Engineer Company (Float Bridge)

During the period 1 November 1969 through 31 Jan 1970, the 553rd Engr Co (FB) accomplished many tasks. During this period, although the unit was used almost exclusively for its secondary mission of hauling or transportation, some bridging was accomplished. An M4T6 five-float reinforced raft was installed at location AP957848 on QL-21 south of Ban Me Thuot on 9 Dec 69. It had been determined that the classification of the French Eiffel bridge at grid coordinates AP944843 was too low to handle the traffic scheduled to move south from Ban Me Thuot on QL-21. A decision was made to construct an M4T6 five-float reinforced raft at this location. An element of the 553rd Engr Co (FB) was tasked with transporting the rafting equipment, advising and assisting in the installation of the raft and associated equipment, and providing power boats and operators to assist in the rafting operations.

In the past three months this company was used most extensively for its secondary mission of transportation. The unit helped move and support the 70th Engr Bn and supported the 864th Engr Bn (Const) with 728 5-ton bridge truck days and 72 2½ ton cargo truck days.

Much progress was made on a general rehabilitation of the company area. The perimeter was cleared of grass and leveled out to a distance of 400 meters from the berm. More intermediate bunkers were added to the perimeter. Concertina on the perimeter was replaced. A cattle fence was installed at a distance of 400 meters from the berm. Claymore and trip flare patterns were reworked and more of each added to the perimeter. More lights were added to the perimeter. The existing guard towers were reworked. The sandbag revetments around the ammunition bunker were replaced with revetments made from sand filled 55 gallon barrels. Six new bunkers were added to the

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billeting areas.

Units attached to this company have been involved in the following projects: two MACV Advisory facilities were completed, two 30' steel guard towers and one alternate Tactical Operations Center was constructed, a helipad and revetment complex was constructed, an emergency overrun for the Dong Ba Thin airfield was constructed, and a U-21 parking area was constructed. In addition to the above, extensive man and equipment hours were committed to the upgrade of the Dong Ba Thin defenses.

9. 687th Engineer Company (Land Clearing).

On 1 November 1969, the unit was deployed on several small projects. The Second and a portion of the Third Platoon were clearing along QL-1 between the villages of Song Mao and Tuy Phong. The First and the remainder of the Third Platoon were clearing around the perimeter of Dong Ba Thin to improve local security.

By 4 November 1969, the Second and Third Platoons had completed clearing south of Phan Rang on QL-1 and returned to Phan Rang. The Third Platoon was sent to Dong Ba Thin while the Second Platoon began clearing a section of the rail road tracks between Phan Rang and Cam Rahn Bay.

On 10 November 1969, all three platoons were engaged in clearing on the Dong Ba Thin perimeter while the Company Headquarters prepared to move to Ban Me Thuot. Clearing was stopped around Dong Ba Thin on 18 November when monsoon rains inundated the entire area. When clearing was halted the project was 60% complete. On 19 November the unit began moving dozers from Dong Ba Thin project to ammunition storage areas "A" and "Y" in Cam Rahn Bay. The move was greatly hampered by a lack of lowboys since the company headquarters departed Phan Rang for Ban Me Thuot that same day.

The Company Headquarters closed into Camp Jerome (Ban Me Thuot, East Field) on 20 November and remained there until 24 November when an area was made available for the unit to move into. The convoy returned to DBT from Ban Me Thuot on 25 November to begin hauling dozers to the new company area. The clearing of both ammunition dumps at Cam Rahn Bay was completed on 25 November.

By 4 December, the entire First Platoon and a portion of the Second Platoon were moved to Ban Me Thuot on 2 convoys. The dozers awaiting transport at Dong Ba Thin were utilized to fill several deep gullies around the 6th Evacuation Convalescent Hospital (Cam Rahn Bay) since the area around Dong Ba Thin remained too wet for clearing to resume.

While the 2d Platoon was preparing to load out of Dong Ba Thin on 6 December, a priority mission was received by 35th Engr Gp to clear in and around Camp Radcliff (An Khe). The convoy carrying seven dozers of the Second Platoon and one from the Third was immediately diverted to An Khe and closed there 9 December 1969. The personnel and equipment at An Khe were

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detached from the 687th Engr Co (LC) and attached to D Company, 299th Engr Bn from 9 December 1969 thru the end of the report period.

On 10 December 1969, the First Platoon was committed to clearing a 10 kilometer stretch of QL-21 (AP978778 to AP998828). The purpose of the mission was to open the road between Lac Thien (district capital) and Ban Me Thuot (Province capital) to civilian traffic as a means of stimulating the local economy. The project was completed 19 December 1969. Preliminary results after the job was completed indicated that traffic had begun to utilize the road and would continue to do so as a result of the clearing.

The company tractor trailers returned from carrying the 2d Platoon to An Khe, picked up the 3d Platoon at Dong Ba Thin and closed Ban Me Thuot on 23 December 1969. The period from 19 December 1969 to 25 December was utilized to prepare dozers of both platoons for the clearing of TL-1 which began on 26 December 1969.

The First and Third Platoons were committed to clearing TL-1. Work proceeded slowly as a result of the heavy jungle and the time required to windrow the cut material. At the end of the report period the project stood at 60% completion and was curtailed for priority work in the area. Highway TL-1 was cleared from ZV252034 to ZV130192 when the project was curtailed.

At the close of the report period all three platoons were on maintenance standdown. The Second Platoon was standing down at An Khe in preparation for a move to Dong Ba Thin to complete that project. The First and Third Platoons were standing down at Ban Me Thuot in preparation for Phase IV of clearing in the Ban Me Thuot area.

Breakdown of unit projects for report period:

<u>PROJECTS</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>ACRES</u>
QL-1 south of Phan Rang	28 Oct - 5 Nov	1240
Dong Ba Thin Perimeter	1 Nov - 18 Nov	1600
Lamo Areas "A" and "Y" Cam Rahn	19 Nov - 25 Nov	650
6th Evac Hosp Cam Rahn	28 Nov - 1 Dec	N/L
QL-1 Lac Tien	10 Dec - 19 Dec	690
TL-1 Ban Don	26 Dec - 31 Jan	1400
Camp Radcliff	9 Dec - 31 Jan	2000

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2. Section 2, Lessons Learned: Commander's Observation, Evaluations, and Recommendations.

a. Personnel

(1) Unit Strength

(a) OBSERVATION: An analysis of gains and losses of personnel in the battalion shows that gains totaled 671, and losses 407. This results in a net gain of 264.

(b) EVALUATION: These figures are misleading in that the acquisition of 2 attached companies in November resulted in an immediate gain of 267 men. Thus, the operating strength of the battalion decreased proportionately during the reporting period. In addition, a true picture of the actual personnel status cannot be obtained by using total strength. Headquarters Company was operating with 108 excess personnel on 31 January. Thus, the battalion was only 139 personnel below strength. However, in the line units, where the operations are performed there was a shortage of 247 men.

(c) RECOMMENDATIONS: Allocations should be processed and replacements assigned without regard to overall battalion strength.

(2) Non-commissioned Officer Status

(a) OBSERVATION: The non-commissioned officer experience gap has widened since the last reporting period.

(b) EVALUATION: 1. Fifteen E-7 slots are being filled by E-5 and E-6 personnel including 5 platoon sergeant positions, and 4 mess stewards.

2. Four E-7 slots, including 2 platoon sergeants, are vacant due to the lack of qualified personnel.

3. Eighteen E-6 slots are being filled by E-4 and E-5 personnel, including 8 foremen/squad leaders and 3 supply sergeants.

4. Ten E-6 slots, including 3 first cooks and 4 foremen are vacant due to lack of qualified personnel.

5. The above shortages reflect a situation which seriously hinders qualified supervision on current projects.

(c) RECOMMENDATIONS: Operations are severely hampered by the lack of experienced personnel in critical areas such as an asphalt platoon sergeant. Every effort should be made to fill these critical positions.

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b. Operations

(1) Bridge Reconnaissance

(a) OBSERVATIONS: While there was only one mission which involved tactical bridging, it was still noted that bridge personnel were not included in the reconnaissance and planning stages of the operation.

(b) EVALUATION: This action resulted in the wrong sized raft being installed at the crossing site.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Recommend that qualified and experienced bridge personnel be consulted and included in the planning and reconnaissance of future missions.

(2) Dong Ba Thin Support

(a) OBSERVATION: It is obvious that a continuous engineer effort is going to be necessary and useful in the Dong Ba Thin area since PA&E personnel are unable to meet all of their requirements and other requirements which are not PA&E functions continue to crop up.

(b) RECOMMENDATION: While necessary and useful, the engineer effort at Dong Ba Thin is also needed elsewhere to assist in the LOC program.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Since critical equipment and manpower is needed elsewhere to assist in the LOC program, the Dong Ba Thin operations should be scaled down and maximum use should be made of indigenous labor and equipment that has proven itself to be of little value on the LOC program.

(3) Transportation Support Requirements

(a) OBSERVATIONS: Transportation Support Missions need more complete planning to provide for adequate lead time and more efficient use of transportation and manpower resources both of which are in short supply.

(b) EVALUATION: To adequately plan and employ the available transportation support resources it is necessary and essential that personnel involved in the planning be familiar with the characteristics and limitations of the vehicles which are to be used. Further, they must be aware of the nature of the cargo to be transported to include total amount of cargo and weight and cube of each unit.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Recommend that the transporting unit be consulted in the planning stages of future transportation support missions. When issuing a mission directive, the following information should be provided to the transporting unit:

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1. Type of material to be transported.
2. Total amount to be transported.
3. Weight and cube of each type of cargo. (est.).
4. Where and when it is to be picked up.
5. Who to contact at pick-up point.
6. What provisions have been made for on-loading.
7. Desired delivery date or deadline.
8. Where it is to be delivered.
9. Who to contact at delivery point.
10. What provisions have to be made for off-loading.
11. Route data:

- a. What route is to be taken.
- b. Road conditions.
- c. Security requirements.
- d. Coordination with other units along the route for

emergency assistance or support.

12. Provisions made for rations, quarters, security of personnel and equipment, and POL support.

If the above information is provided on a timely basis the unit can make effective plans and complete the mission in a more efficient manner.

(4) Installing M8A1 Matting

(a) OBSERVATION: When installing M8A1 matting, it becomes increasingly more difficult to properly join successive panels. This is due to the amount of play in the connectors after being joined, resulting in improper alignment of the matting.

(b) EVALUATION: Devising a method which keeps successive M8A1 mats aligned would greatly facilitate installation of the matting.

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(c) RECOMMENDATION: An effective "aligner" for M8A1 matting can be made by weaving a cable through the holes of the female side of a piece of M8A1 matting. This panel of matting is then connected to the last of the series of panels to be aligned (usually every 20 to 30 foot series). The ends of the cable are then fastened to a truck. The power supplied by the truck is sufficient to remove the slack in the joints between the panels, thus, in effect "stretching" and aligning the matting.

(5) Expedient Paint Rollers

(a) OBSERVATION: Rollers to apply non-skid paint compound to runway matting are at times impossible to obtain through supply channels.

(b) EVALUATION: When this is the case, it becomes necessary to devise expedient rollers to complete the task.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Expedient paint rollers for applying non-skid paint compound to steel runway matting can be made by wrapping strips, cut from old army blankets, around coke or other similar type cans. Holes are then punched in the center of each end of the can and handles, fashioned from brazing rod or other similar material are inserted. If longer handles are desired, wooden ones can be fastened to the wire to achieve the length desired.

(6) Stripping for Perimeter Standoff

(a) OBSERVATION: When clearing land around a base camp some thought should be given to the problem that may occur later.

(b) EVALUATION: Stripping all vegetation from hillside and surrounding areas creates a tremendous dust problem when the dry season arrives. During the monsoon rainy season the absence of this vegetation more than likely will cause tremendous erosion problems.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: If vegetation must be cleared for maximum security of one's base camp, the blades of the dozers used should be lowered within a few inches of the ground in order to clear away bushes and trees, leaving the roots below to stabilize the soil.

(7) Selection of Projects

(a) OBSERVATION: Land Clearing Directives often come to a land clearing unit from personnel who are not familiar with the capabilities or limitations of a land clearing company.

(b) EVALUATION: The above observation results in many unrealistic project directives. Primary errors are in requesting areas for clearance which are too small and widely separated or steep mountains where clearing would require far more time than allotted in the directives.

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(c) **RECOMMENDATIONS:** All requests for land clearing from non-engineer units include an indorsement from an individual familiar with land clearing giving his evaluation of the areas to be cleared and work estimate before the request leaves the requesting command.

(8) **Company Deployment**

(a) **OBSERVATION:** TO&E of a land clearing company was written to cover only situations where the company would be employed as a single unit. Experience has shown that the company is more efficient when it is employed in this manner rather than on several widely separated platoon size projects.

(b) **EVALUATION:** When the company is assigned to work several small platoon sized projects, out of supporting distance of the company headquarters, the unit maintenance section must be split up to support each separate project. This situation results in an overall decrease in the effectiveness of company maintenance. The splitting up of the company also greatly decreases supervision since detached platoons are often attached to units without enough experience in land clearing to appreciate the particular problem involved.

(c) **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That the land clearing company be deployed as a unit whenever possible. Further, that when separate platoon jobs are necessary they be planned so that the company headquarters can be centrally located between the jobs in order to supervise and support all of them.

(9) **Placing Pickets in Headwall**

(a) **OBSERVATION:** When a headwall is subject to hydrostatic and soil pressure, the walls often fail.

(b) **EVALUATION:** The failure often is the result of the studs shearing where the tie cable is attached to the studs. This can be alleviated by the use of U-shaped pickets to act as a bearing surface for the cable.

(c) **RECOMMENDATION:** U-shaped pickets placed between the tie cable and studs will prevent failure due to the cable shearing the stud.

(10) **Expedient Revetments**

(a) **OBSERVATION:** Revetments are a necessary part of base camp protection. The use of sandbags, while very effective, is also time consuming and expensive.

(b) **EVALUATION:** The time factor and number of sandbags can be reduced considerably by forming a crib of uncut lumber (e.g. 3" x 12"). The crib is then filled with sand or fill material. Sandbags may be used to hold the filler in place. The materials can be salvaged when a more permanent revetment is constructed.

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(c) RECOMMENDATION: When time and sandbags are important factors, an uncut lumber crib is an effective expedient revetment.

c. Training

(1) Command Information Classes

(a) OBSERVATION: The Enlisted Men work better if they are kept informed, and are given an opportunity to air their feelings.

(b) EVALUATION: Very often the enlisted personnel cannot understand the reasons for undertaking certain requirements. They find it difficult to remain motivated and perform efficiently when they cannot see the overall scope of the operation.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: During weekly command information classes a short talk on the units operations and forthcoming requirements, followed by an opportunity to ask questions concerning the unit will boost morale and provide the incentive essential to efficient operation.

d. Intelligence

(1) Mine Detection

(a) OBSERVATION: During the initial phase of the quarter, several vehicles were extensively damaged by anti-vehicular mines placed in the Whiskey Mountain access road.

(b) EVALUATION: It was found that the incidents ceased when a more thorough mine sweeping technique, was employed. Since the initial incidents 5 mines have been found in the road during the daily sweep, and all were blown without incident.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: In all mine sweep operations, detectors should be used rather than depending on visual means. In addition, the use of an asphaltic dust palliative sprayed regularly decreases the available area for mine placement.

(2) Security of Company Rear Detachment

(a) OBSERVATION: When a land clearing operation is in progress, the Company Headquarters is incapable of securing itself. Normally, the strength of the company rear area is from 10 to 20 personnel. The majority of these personnel are mechanics. The type of repairs performed on equipment in the rear area averages about 4 days in duration. When mechanics are on guard every two to four days, extreme problems are encountered in work scheduling and repair efficiency.

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(b) EVALUATION: Rear area maintenance and repair is greatly hampered by the loss of mechanics to guard.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That the land clearing company rear area be placed in a secure location or be secured by non-unit personnel.

e. Logistics

(1) Repair Parts

(a) OBSERVATION: Repair parts are still in constant demand at Whiskey Mountain. The availability and support is very limited due to the distance from the major supply sources in Nha Trang and Cam Ranh Bay.

(b) EVALUATION: Some parts have begun to arrive at Whiskey Mountain but a stable, scheduled means of transportation in supplying that location would ease the problem.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: More command emphasis be placed on making parts available.

(2) Company Moves

(a) OBSERVATION: Excessive time is wasted when land clearing companies make long moves (1 day or more travel one-way) utilizing only organic transportation. Utilizing all authorized transportation, the company requires four separate loads to move the entire company. Normally a one day haul would require two days for loading, unloading, and maintenance on tractor trailers. During such a move, any elements of the company clearing during the move are left without transportation for their dozers.

(b) EVALUATION: To make a long move with all TO&E equipment, much valuable project time is wasted and any projects in progress during the move are crippled for lack of heavy haul capability.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: In planning land clearing operations, preparation should be made for augmenting the unit's haul capability to preclude excessive lost time.

f. Organization

(1) Direct Support Facility

(a) OBSERVATION: The lack of space on the industrial site at Whiskey Mountain necessitated leaving the direct support capability in the rear area at LZ Betty.

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(b) EVALUATION: It was felt that by leaving the DSU in the rear area, and combining the ordnance capability of A Company, with the Engineer capability of 73rd Engr Co (CS) a more efficient operation would result. This allows better supervision, more complete facilities, and higher control over ASI and PLL requirements.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: In future industrial complexes of the Whiskey Mountain type, thought should be given to combining such facilities.

(2) Land Clearing Company Maintenance Platoon

(a) OBSERVATION: The land clearing company maintenance platoon is normally divided into three sections to support land clearing operations. These are: Engineer Organizational maintenance section (operates in the field), Engineer Direct Support maintenance section (operates in the rear area), and Ordnance Organizational maintenance section (operates in the rear area). Each of these sections require a Non-commissioned Officer supervisor to function efficiently.

(b) EVALUATION: To function efficiently, the maintenance platoon must provide support both in the rear area for major repairs and in the forward area for minor repairs. Under TOE 5-500C only one non-commissioned officer is authorized.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That the maintenance platoon be authorized three non-commissioned officers in the following MOS's: 1 E-7 62B40, 1 E-6 62B40, and 1 E-6 63B40.

(3) Radio Repair Capability

(a) OBSERVATION: Under existing TOE's several units have no capability to repair communications at the organizational level.

(b) EVALUATION: Unnecessary time has been wasted in evacuating communications equipment which could have been repaired on site.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That one slot 2-4, 31B20, be added to TOE's for all assigned units.

g. Other

(1) Safety Precautions in Pouring of Lend

(a) OBSERVATION: When pouring lend it has been noticed that it can become extremely dangerous practice when the surface to be poured into or upon is wet.

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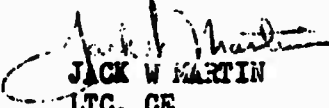
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for Period ending 31 January 1970, ACS CSFOR-65 (81)

(b) EVALUATION: That lead should be poured slowly to prevent splash back into the worker's face.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Commanders should take every safety measure possible when handling molten lead, to prevent injury and possible raining of working force.

1 Incl  
Organizational Structure

  
JACK W MARTIN  
LTC, CE  
Commanding

DISTRIBUTION:

8 - 18th Engineer Brigade  
7 - 35th Engineer Group (Const)  
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MCN-CO (31 January 1970) 1st Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned of the 364th Engineer Battalion (Construction), Period Ending 31 January 1970, RCS CSFOR-65 (R2)

DA, Headquarters, 35th Engineer Group (Const), AFO 96312, 6 April 1970

TO: Commanding General, 18th Engineer Brigade, AFO 96377

1. This Headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report - Lessons Learned for the quarterly-period ending 31 January 1970 from the 364th Engineer Battalion (Construction) and concurs with the comments and observations of the commander.

2. The following comments are keyed to the paragraphs noted in parenthesis.

a. (Section II, Item A1). This is a local problem. The inequitable distribution of assets within the battalion and the excessively high number of personnel assigned to the Headquarters Company at the expense of the line companies has been brought to the attention of the battalion commander. Allocations of personnel and replacements continue to be made in accordance with USARV policies and personnel practices.

b. (Section II, Item A-2). Shortages of critical personnel are monitored closely within the Group. Replacements and transfers within the Group are utilized to the maximum extent possible to alleviate shortages. When particularly critical vacancies exist assistance is requested from the 18th Engineer Brigade.

c. (Section II, Item B-2). All units experience a need for good resource management, scheduling, and control due to the existing limited assets to perform the overall engineer requirement for LOC construction, operational support, and base camp construction in South Vietnam. Construction operations at Dong Da Thin are evaluated in comparison with other projects within the 35th Engineer Group and are considered to be warranted.

d. (Section II, Item B-7). It is the responsibility of the constructing battalion to inform the headquarters issuing the constructing directive of the scope and impact of the directed project. At this time, the constructing unit is given the opportunity to recommend modifications to the directive, make start date and completion dates estimates and to comment generally on the directives. Most directives also direct or encourage direct liaison with user prior to commencement of construction activities. Land clearing directives are staffed through the Engineer Section, IFV, who are quite knowledgeable in land clearing operations.

e. (Section II, Item B-8). Concur with recommendation that unit should be committed as a whole, not piecemeal. If company is split, company headquarters should stay with the largest separate unit and headquarters and maintenance facility should be kept together (unless contingencies unquestionably dictate separation). Good management of

EGN-CO (31 January 1970) 1st Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned of the 864th Engineer  
Battalion (Construction), Period Ending 31 January 1970,  
RCS CSFOR-65 (R2)

resources and personnel can alleviate, if not eliminate, supervision and control problems.

f. (Section II, Item E-1). Concur in recommendation. The battalion commander has been directed to place more emphasis on maintenance. Good maintenance management coupled with correct requisitioning and follow-up procedures by the battalion combined with use of regularly scheduled daily Air Force flights should preclude most of the repair parts acquisition problems presently being experienced by the unit.

g. (Section II, Item F(2)). Concur in recommendation. Maintenance, especially in isolated areas of operation, is the major problem faced by the land clearing company.

h. (Section II, Item F-3). Concur in recommendation. One 31L20 per company size unit would be appropriate since construction units in Vietnam generally operate separately away from Battalion headquarters.

  
HARRY A. GRIFFITH  
COL, CE  
Commanding

AVBC-OP (31 Jan 70) 2nd Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, 864th Engineer Battalion (Construction), Period Ending 31 Jan 70, RCS CSFOR-65 (R2)

DA, HEADQUARTERS, 18TH ENGINEER BRIGADE, APO 96377 10 APR 1970

TO: Commanding General, U.S. Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHCC-DST, APO 96375

1. This Headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report - Lessons Learned for the 864th Engineer Battalion (Construction), as indorsed by the 35th Engineer Group (Construction). The report is considered to be an accurate account of the Battalion's activities during the reporting period.

2. This Headquarters concurs with the observations and recommendations of the Battalion and Group Commanders, with the following comments added:

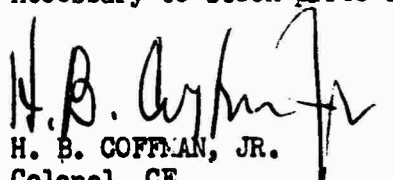
a. Reference Sec 2, item a(2). Concur. Shortages of non-commissioned officers in the grades E6 and E7 exist throughout the Brigade. Personnel requisitions and critical shortage lists are forwarded each month to USARV. Replacements are equitably distributed throughout the Brigade.

b. Reference Sec 2, item b(2). Concur with Comments of the Group Commander. Dong Ba Thin has recently been designated a class A installation and is entitled to increased PA&E support.

c. Reference Sec 2, item e(1). Information from CRB SUPCOM Transportation Division indicates seaborne transportation between Cam Ranh Bay and Phan Thiet is presently underutilized. On the other hand, availability of parts continues to be a general problem throughout Vietnam.

d. Reference Sec 2, item f(2). Concur in principle. Land clearing companies will be reorganized in June 1970 under MTOE 5-87T. This reorganization will provide expanded maintenance capability at both the organizational and direct support level.

e. Reference Sec 2, item f(3). Non-concur. A radio repairman is authorized in the construction battalion communications section. Part of the function of this section is to provide repair service for the equipment of subordinate units. It should not be necessary to stock parts at company level.

  
H. B. COFFMAN, JR.  
Colonel, CE  
Deputy Commander

CF:

- 1 - CO, 35th Engr Gp
- 1 - CO, 864th Engr Bn

AVHGC-DST (31 Jan 70) 3d Ind  
SUBJECT: Operational Report of 864th Engineer Battalion (Construction)  
for Period ending 31 January 1970, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

Headquarters, United States Army, Vietnam, APO San Francisco 96375 24 APR 1970

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-DT,  
APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 31 January 1970 from Headquarters, 864th Engineer Battalion (Construction) and concurs with the comments of indorsing headquarters.

2. Reference item concerning "NCO Status", page 14, paragraph 2a(2), 2d Indorsement, paragraph 2a: concur. This headquarters assigns equitably among all USARV major subordinate commands. For assignment purposes the 864th Engineer Battalion receives replacements from the 18th Engineer Brigade. Commanders at any level may allocate personnel resources to best perform the mission. Under the two-grade substitution assignment criteria applied by DA for fill of USARV requisitions, this command receives but 40-70% of its middle grade NCO requirements. The remainder are primarily filled by AIT graduates. This experience is likely to continue. No action by DA or USARPAC is recommended.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

  
E. J. WINTER  
1LT, AGC  
Assistant Adjutant General

Cy furn:  
18th Engr Bde  
864th Engr Bn

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GPOP-DT (31 Jan 70) 4th Ind  
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 864th Engineer Battalion (Construction)  
for Period Ending 31 January 1970, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 27 APR 70

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the  
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters concurs in subject report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

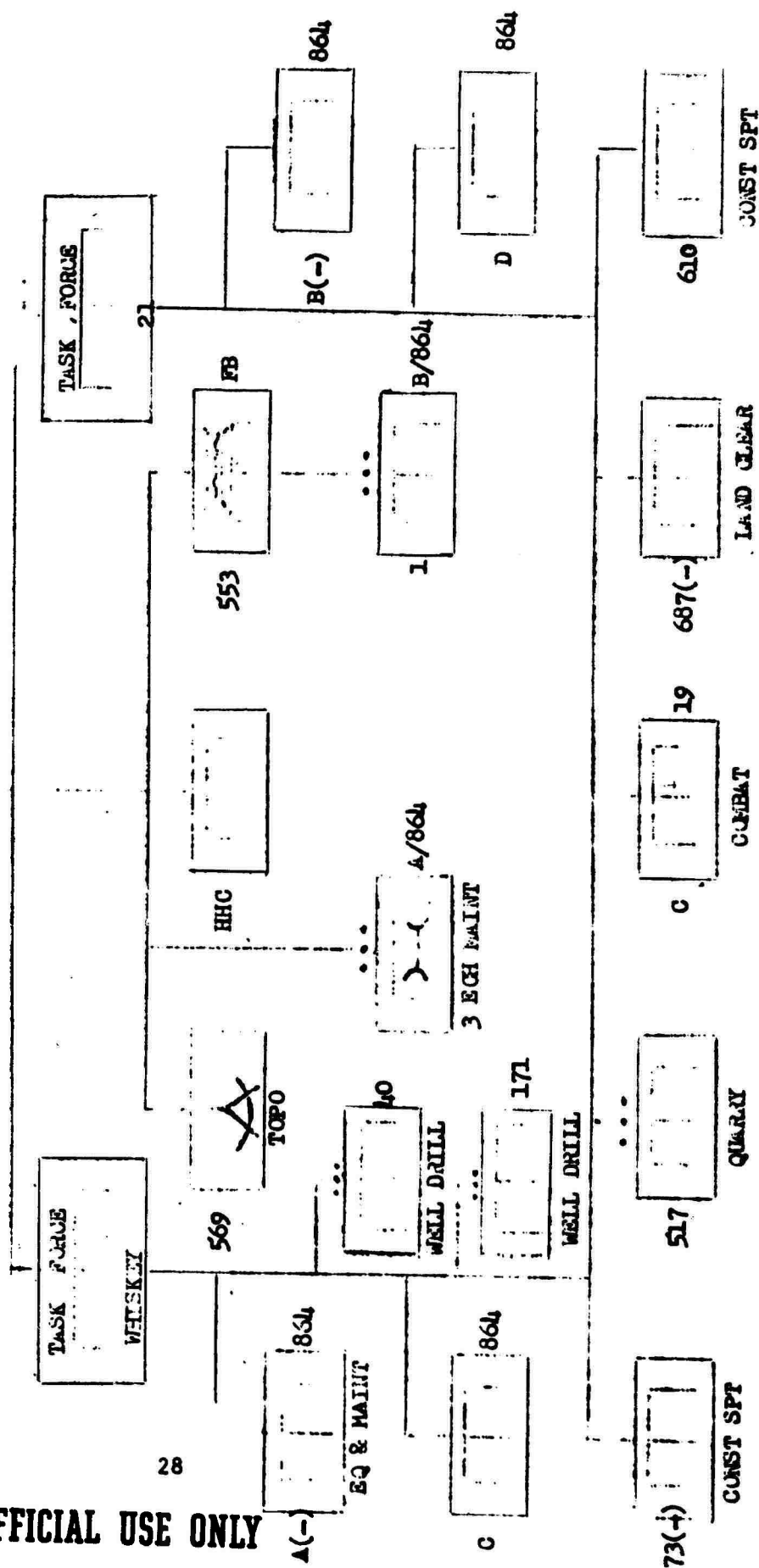
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